

receiving apparatus 3 directly, or via a public telecommunication line or the Internet. In this manner, the generated order file 6 (including the confirmed order information) and the image file 7 can be transferred to the order receiving apparatus 3. Alternatively, the order file 6 or the like may be recorded in the memory card 2 wherein the image file 7 has been recorded and the file may be provided to the order receiving apparatus 3 via the memory card 2, as in the case of the embodiment shown in Figure 1.

According to the embodiment shown in Figure 8, a user who possesses a conventional digital camera which does not comprise the order confirming function can place an order according to the order processing method of the present invention.

What is claimed is:

1. An order processing method used in an image output service, the order processing method comprising the steps of:
- obtaining image data by photographing an image or reading a recording medium;
  - replaying the obtained image data as a visible image on a display medium;
  - receiving an output instruction regarding the image data, the output instruction being input from an input apparatus based on the replay of the image data;
  - generating order information describing the output

instruction in a predetermined data format and recording the order information in a recording medium;

displaying on the display medium all image data output of which has been instructed and the content of the instruction regarding the image data so that a requester of the image output service can confirm the content of the output instruction;

certifying an order by recording confirmed order information in the recording medium when a predetermined order confirmation operation indicating that the order confirmation has been completed is accepted; and

carrying out the image output service based on the order information recorded in the recording medium only when the confirmed order information has been recorded in the recording medium.

2. An order processing system used in an image output service, the order processing system comprising an order information generating apparatus and an order receiving apparatus,

the order information generating apparatus comprising:

data obtaining means for obtaining image data by photographing an image or reading a recording medium;

display means for carrying out replay of the obtained image data as a visible image on a display medium;

instruction receiving means for receiving an output instruction regarding the image data, the output instruction being

input from an input apparatus based on the replay of the image data;

order information recording means for generating order information describing the output instruction in a predetermined data format and recording the order information in a recording medium;

order content confirming means for displaying on the display medium all image data, output of which has been instructed and the content of the instruction regarding the image data so that a requester of the image output service can confirm the content of the output instruction; and

order certifying means for certifying an order by recording confirmed order information in the recording medium when a predetermined order confirmation operation indicating that the order confirmation has been completed is accepted;

the order receiving apparatus comprising:

data reading means for reading the order information recorded in the recording medium;

confirmed information certifying means for certifying whether or not the conformed order information has been recorded in the recording medium; and

output instructing means for instructing, based on the order information recorded in the recording medium, output of the image data to various kinds of output apparatuses only when the confirmed

order information has been recorded in the recording medium.

3. An order information generating apparatus comprising:

data obtaining means for obtaining image data by photographing an image or reading a recording medium;

5 display means for carrying out replay of the obtained image data as a visible image on a display medium;

instruction receiving means for receiving an output instruction regarding the image data, the output instruction being input from an input apparatus based on the replay of the image data;

order information recording means for generating order information describing the output instruction in a predetermined data format and recording the information in a recording medium;

15 order content confirming means for displaying on the display medium all image data output of which has been instructed and the content of the instruction regarding the image data so that a requester of an image output service can confirm the content of the output instruction; and

20 order certifying means for certifying an order by recording confirmed order information in the recording medium when a predetermined order confirmation operation indicating that the order confirmation has been completed is accepted.

4. An order receiving apparatus which receives an order for an image output service by obtaining order information in a digital

format, the order receiving apparatus comprising:

data reading means for reading the order information describing an output instruction regarding image data from a recording medium;

5 confirmed information certifying means for certifying whether or not confirmed order information indicating that a requester of the image output service has confirmed the content of the output instruction is recorded in the recording medium; and

10 output instructing means for instructing, based on the order information recorded in the recording medium, output of the image data to various kinds of output apparatuses only when the confirmed order information is recorded in the recording medium.

15 5. A digital camera having an order information generating function, the digital camera comprising:

photographing means for obtaining image data by photographing an image;

image recording means for recording the image data having been obtained in a recording medium;

20 display means for carrying out replay of the obtained image data as a visible image on a monitor attached to the digital camera;

instruction receiving means for receiving an output instruction regarding the image data, the output instruction being input from an operation button or the like based on the replay

of the image data;

order information recording means for recording order information describing the output instruction in a predetermined data format in the recording medium;

5 order content confirming means for displaying on the monitor all image data output of which has been instructed and the content of the instruction regarding the image data so that a requester of an image output service can confirm the content of the output instruction; and

10 order certifying means for certifying an order by recording confirmed order information in the recording medium when a predetermined order confirmation operation indicating that the order confirmation has been completed is accepted.

15 6. A digital camera having the order information generating function as claimed in Claim 5, the digital camera further comprising confirmation operation canceling means for canceling the order confirmation operation when the conformed order information is updated after having been recorded in the recording medium and/or when deletion of image data representing at least  
20 one image recorded in the recording medium is carried out.

7. A digital camera having the order information generating function as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the confirmation operation canceling means deletes the order information when all image data, output of which has been instructed, are deleted from the recording

medium as a result of the deletion.

8. A digital camera having the order information generating function as claimed in ~~any one of claims 5 to 7~~, wherein the order information recording means describes the order information in an order file and records the order file in the recording medium, and

the order certifying means certifies an order by setting a hidden property of the order file to visible.

9. A digital camera having the order information generating function as claimed in ~~any one of claims 5 to 7~~, wherein the order information recording means describes the order information in an order file and records the order file in the recording medium, and

the order certifying means certifies an order by setting a read/write property of the order file to read-only.

10. A digital camera having the order information generating function as claimed in ~~any one of claims 5 to 7~~, wherein the order information recording means describes the order information in an order file and records the order file in the recording medium, and

the order certifying means certifies an order by describing a valid date as order file generation date in the order file.

11. A digital camera having the order information generating function as claimed in ~~any one of claims 5 to 7~~, wherein the order

information recording means describes the order information in an order file and records the order file in the recording medium, and

the order certifying means certifies an order by describing a code meaning order confirmation completion in the order file.

12. A digital camera having the order information generating function as claimed in any one of Claims 5 to 7, wherein the image recording means records image data representing each image as an image file in the recording medium, and

the order information recording means records the order information as accompanying information included in the image file, and

the order certifying means certifies an order by describing a code meaning order confirmation completion in at least one image file in the recording medium.

13. A digital camera having the order information generating function as claimed in <sup>claim 13</sup> ~~any one of Claims 5 to 12~~, the digital camera further comprising operation urging means for carrying out display for prompting the order confirmation operation execution by the requester.

14. A digital camera having the order information generating function as claimed in Claim 13, wherein the display is a message output on the monitor.

15. A digital camera having the order information generating



function as claimed in Claim 13 ~~or 14~~, wherein the operation urging means carries out the display for a predetermined period after an operation to switch off a power of the digital camera has been carried out, and switches the power off after the predetermined period has elapsed.

16. A digital camera having the order information generating function as claimed in Claim 13 ~~or 14~~, wherein the recording medium is detachable from a body of the digital camera and

the operation urging means carries out the display when the recording medium is pulled out from the body of the digital camera.

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